DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 553 CS 216 034

AUTHOR Reiss, Donna
TITLE From WAC to CCCAC: Writing across the Curriculum Becomes Communication, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking (and Computers) across the Curriculum at Tidewater Community College.
PUB DATE 1996-07-02
NOTE 8p.; Revised version of a paper presented as guest speaker to Art Young's graduate seminar on Writing across the Curriculum (Houghton, MI, June 1995).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Computer Uses in Education; Cooperation; *Critical Thinking; Professional Development; Program Descriptions; Teacher Workshops; Two Year Colleges; *Writing Across the Curriculum
IDENTIFIERS Communication Across the Curriculum; *Tidewater Community College VA

ABSTRACT

Even without a formal program for writing across the curriculum, Tidewater Community College in Virginia has sustained communication-across-the-curriculum activities for nearly 20 years. Faculty groups have routinely gathered both formally and informally to discuss ways to improve student writing, to incorporate communication and collaboration into individual courses and curricula, and to incorporate communications technology to enhance student learning across the curriculum. During a two-year project, 30 faculty members from 13 teaching fields attended monthly meetings to discuss issues in learning, communicating, and critical thinking. Faculty members have given presentations in the region and around the country on using writing for learning in math, natural sciences, engineering, writing and literature, and history. Since the official end of the project (in 1994), an informal group continues to meet, by the end of the Spring 1995 calling itself the Task Force in Communication and Critical Thinking across the Disciplines. The director of the two-year project (and former director of the Writing Center) is now focusing on using communications technology as a tool to enhance communication, collaboration, and critical thinking across the curriculum. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 412 553

From WAC to CCCAC

Writing Across the Curriculum Becomes Communication, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking (and Computers) Across the Curriculum at Tidewater Community College

Presented at Michigan Technological University, Houghton, as guest speaker to Art Young's graduate seminar on Writing Across the Curriculum, June 1995 (updated July 2, 1996) by Donna Reiss, Department of English, Tidewater Community College

You Don't Have To Have a Program To Have WAC-CAC-CCAC

Even without a formal program for WAC, Tidewater Community College has sustained communication-across-the-curriculum activities for nearly twenty years. Faculty groups have routinely gathered both formally and informally to discuss ways to improve student writing, ways to incorporate communication and collaboration into individual courses and curricula, and recently, ways to incorporate communications technology to enhance student learning across the curriculum.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
D. Reiss
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Tidewater Community College

CS216034

Tidewater Community College is a three-campus state-supported open admissions institution offering transferable credit courses for the first two years of college; developmental courses to bring underprepared students to curriculum level in reading, writing, and math; and occupational and

technical courses and programs. Campuses are located in Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, and Chesapeake. A Norfolk campus is under construction.

At the Virginia Beach Campus, the largest of the three campuses, a Writing Center and Grammar Hotline were formally established in 1980 to serve the students and the local community. From its inception, this Writing Center was committed to supporting all efforts to enhance the literacy levels of students and to encouraging writing in all disciplines as fundamental to a literate student population.

During the fifteen years since it began, the Writing Center has acted as a founder of or partner in many writing-and-thinking-across-the-curriculum initiatives and in instructional computing for general education. No formal WAC program exists at TCC. However, the three campuses have written a strategic plan for a writing center collaborative and have formed a task force on critical thinking and communicating across the disciplines. In 1995 each campus formed a Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable based on the model developed by Steve Gilbert of the American Association for Higher Education. In 1996 these campus groups identified a college coordinator for the local TLTRs and joined the Virginia Community College System's statewide TLTR.

Beginnings: The Literacy Committee

In April of 1983, the Writing Center Director at the Virginia Beach Campus

proposed an ad hoc Literacy Committee composed of faculty from every discipline along with representatives from the reading and writing programs. The proposal included the following items.

* The Writing Center could serve as the center for the Literacy Committee since the Writing Center already reflects the College s commitment to improving composition skills. A representative of the reading program and representatives from each academic division should be involved. The activities of the Literacy Committee should be as follows.
* To encourage faculty members to incorporate writing in each discipline
* To provide faculty members with suggestions for and training in techniques for increasing literacy among students
* To provide faculty members with assistance in planning assignments and instruction that would sharpen reasoning and literacy skills
* To publicize the demands of transfer institutions and businesses for literacy in graduates
* To provide students with support for their personal efforts to improve writing and reading skills
* To emphasize the College s commitment to literacy through statements in the catalogue, articles in the school newspaper, and posters on campus

This committee began meeting in the spring of 1984. Over the years this ad hoc committee has remained one of the most active faculty groups on campus. Its activities have included the following.

* Sponsored a guest speaker on writing across the curriculum at the fall faculty convocation
* In collaboration with Paul D. Camp and Southside Community Colleges, received a grant from the Virginia Community College System Institute of Instructional Excellence to conduct a regional workshop on literacy across the disciplines
* Developed and published a Student Writing Guide containing models of student writing from a variety of disciplines
* Received a grant from the Virginia Community College System Institute of Instructional Excellence to conduct a regional workshop on literacy across the disciplines
* As a result of publication of the Student Writing Guide (still in print), won a $400 Developer Award from the Virginia Community College System Institute for Instructional Excellence; this grant funded the first annual Student Writing Contest
* Received an Excellence in Education certificate of recognition from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, for the Literacy Committee
* Sponsored informal workshops for faculty: Designing Writing Assignment, Ungraded Writing for Learning, and Natural Language Translation
* Received a grant from the Virginia Community College Association for a Cross-Disciplinary Literacy Workshop: Reading for Learning

---

Writing for Learning Across the Curriculum and Across the College

The founder of the Literacy Committee at the Virginia Beach Campus wrote and received funding for a two-year Funds for Excellence Grant from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1992-1994. Planned as the beginning of a formal collegewide emphasis on communication as fundamental to learning, this collegewide grant project grew out of the formal assessment of writing and thinking skills conducted by the General Education subcommittee of the College s Assessment Committee.

During the two years of the project, thirty faculty members from thirteen teaching fields attended monthly meetings to discuss issues in learning, communicating, and critical thinking. They demonstrated their own class projects. Each year, a professional consultant conducted a day-and-a-half training session to initiate that year s project. Two additional workshops brought in the same consultant, whose workshops inspired more than one hundred TCC teachers, many of whom subsequently conducted workshops for their colleagues on campus, at regional conferences, and at national conferences.

Faculty members have given presentations in the region and around the country on using writing for learning in math, natural sciences, engineering, education, writing and literature, and history. Teachers in the health fields have held communication-for-learning workshops for their colleagues. And an ultrasound teacher published an article on writing-for-learning in a professional journal on sonography. Most of these

activities are a direct result of their participation in this project.

At the end of each year of the project and again one year after the project ended, the project director wrote official reports that identify the goals and results. These reports summarize the activities of the project participants and include sample faculty writing assignments, dissemination activities, and evaluations of the project. Additionally, during the project period, the director sent to every participant and selected administrators copies of summaries of the monthly meetings and of the evaluations of special sessions such as the national consultant's workshops.

After the official project ended, an informal group continued to meet, by the end of the Spring 1995 as a Task Force on Communication and Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines. This task force with members from the administration as well as a variety of disciplines established goals and a newsletter as the academic year ended.

I was the director of the Writing Center for the establishment of the Literacy Committee and wrote the grant that supported the two-year writing-to-learn project and became project director. Since that time, I have left the Writing Center position to focus on development of instructional applications of communications technology for my classes and for the college. I have been conducting and coordinating workshops for faculty, now with an emphasis on using communications technology as a tool to enhance communication, collaboration, and critical thinking across the curriculum. During the 1995-1996 academic year, I was on leave from TCC to

serve as Faculty-in-Residence for Instructional Technology at the Virginia Community College System offices, conducting workshops with faculty throughout Virginia and helping to develop a plan for professional development in instructional technology and the integrating of technology into instruction.

Back at TCC in the summer of 1996, I am once again teaching and working on the college's Teaching, Learning, Technology Roundtable. With colleagues from a range of teaching fields and support services, we are developing a technology plan that will provide basic computing in the near future and will progress to provide computer-supported instruction at the college.

From WAC to CCCAC: Writing Across the Curriculum Becomes Communication, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking (and Computers) Across the Curriculum
http://www.infi.net/tcc/tcresourc/faculty/dreiss/wachis.html

This site was prepared by Donna Reiss, Department of English, Tidewater Community College-Virginia Beach, Kempsville Building D-113, 1700 College Crescent, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456 - Phone 804-427-7364 - Fax 804-427-7362 - E-mail tcreisd@vblrc2.tc.cc.va.us
Updated July 2, 1996